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Memo Regarding Size Limit on Colleges

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Governors State University

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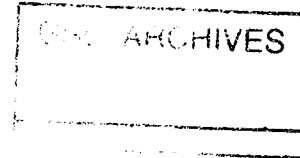


Governors State University

Park Forest South, Illinois 60466 312/534-5000

M. Kaplan-LRC

MEMORANDUM



TO: All Faculty & Staff

CC: Innovator

FROM: William E. Engbretson *WE*

DATE: February 20, 1976

During 1969-1970 the University faculty/staff worked closely with the staff of the Board of Governors and the Board of Higher Education to plan Governors State University. One of the concepts agreed upon at an early date was that the University's growth would be such that collegial units would have a "finite size of 1500 headcount students." (Educational Planning Guidelines, approved by the BOG and BHE in 1970). And the Report on New Senior Institutions, BHE, 1968, which carried more than a dozen recommendations that guided the planning of GSU, stated that "the programs of the colleges be a blending of liberal arts and sciences for direct entry into occupations. . . ." Further, our Educational Planning Guidelines postulated fifth and sixth colleges as our four initial colleges reached maximum size.

During these five years the growth of BPS and HLD has been very rapid when compared to CS and EAS, even though the growth was somewhat managed, especially in our first three years. In our judgment, the annual operating budgets have not always been large enough to provide the academic and support services necessary to attain and maintain the highest possible quality education in the four colleges. None of the colleges at present has enough faculty in certain disciplines to support as adequately as we would like the approved academic programs. Our planning has been restricted on colleges five and six, and our student projections have been reduced the past two years.

The Phase I building, which now accommodates over 3200 FTE was designed to house only 2000 FTE until Phase II was constructed by fall, 1975. Planning funds for Phase II have been denied for the last three years. Even if planning funds were to be recommended, appropriated and released this year, it would be at least 1980 before Phase II would be functional. As you all know we are now in a "crunch" situation and will be increasingly so in the future.

As Faze I reported recently, the Board asked us at the January meeting to project program and enrollment figures for FY 77 at the two different BHE approved funding request levels and at a reduced (1/2) level as well. A report on these "guesstimates" was made by the Executive Officer at the February BOG meeting. The Board asked all the Universities to focus on lower



funding expectancies with full awareness that the BHE's failure to recommend funds for expanded programs will cause restrictions. It is the BHE's presumption that future program expansion, if any, will come from "resource reallocation." In other words, little, if any, new money for new programs will be provided in the immediate or even foreseeable future. Current BHE staff recommendations on how we should spend our FY 77 funds reflect that thinking and also betray a lack of knowledge of what we had to do this fiscal year of no new money and increased enrollments.

Last August HLD recommended no new admissions in three programs. This had to be done, was done, and compliments are again sent to the staff and administration there for the heavy load they undertook. In December EAS recommended closing Nursing due to lack of faculty. This, also, was necessary. Frankly, I am pleased at both the willingness of all concerned to undertake an increase of 1500 headcount university-wide with no new resources, and the intelligence of the faculty and staff to make every effort to uphold quality.

Of course this has strained us, particularly in those programs cited above where we had to close enrollments. Prior to the second trimester, HLD justifiably restricted size of classes to 30. This also was defensible and the College's administration and staff are again commended for that recommendation. We cannot shortchange our marvelous GSU students. Better to serve fewer exceedingly well than to continue inordinately larger and larger classes and let programs grow beyond our ability to offer qualitative instruction and advisement.

If BHE operating budget recommendations without tuition increases become a reality, we expect to have up to 4000 FTE in fall, 1976, where in fall, 1975 we stood at 3363. This increase will have to come in BPS, EAS and CS since HLD is already over its projected finite size and BPS is near its finite size. If one half of BHE recommendations becomes a reality, then we project no increase in student body since funds provided thereby will pay 5% salary increases, price increases and maybe less than five positions of those we lost last year in ICC, LRC, CS and EAS as well as support units.

I do not like to restrict enrollments. . . nor programs. I feel even more strongly about short changing students when we cannot provide the programmatic and faculty support necessary to provide them with an excellent educational experience.

There are therefore, academic, physical, and fiscal reasons for placing additional regulations on our growth. Effective immediately, college size will be limited to a maximum of 1500 headcount students as originally planned and agreed upon. This decision was reached by the Administrative Council after lengthy consideration. It is not an easy decision to make. Collegial programs that have gone beyond a 30:1 student:staff ratio must be limited. The Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs will work with the collegial faculties and administrators to implement this decision. In addition, we are requesting the total university administration, faculty, and staff, and especially our students, to assist prospective students who are interested in the over-subscribed instructional programs to search for alternative educational programs either at Governors State University, or in other institutions. Further, we are asking the Acting Vice President, Academic Affairs to assist the Deans and the colleges in modification of their academic offerings to ensure that a blending of liberal arts and sciences occurs in all instructional programs and that growth is

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managed in all instructional programs. Teacher education undergraduate programs are generally limited to current levels by BHE Master Plan IV. This does not apply to areas of crucial needs such as Bilingual-Bicultural Education. I solicit the cooperation and support of all University personnel in undertaking these important academic changes, bearing in mind we are an experimenting institution with a five year history of excellent achievement.

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